

200 DRAWINGS

THE DRAWINGS OF HEINRICH KLEY



HEINRICH KLEY

In 1908, in the Munich Expressionist literary and art magazine, *Die Jugend*, there suddenly appeared, unheralded and unexpected, a series of remarkable pen and ink sketches signed "Kley." Sometimes black and white, sometimes covered with color washes, usually without captions, they were characterized by a highly individual skittery technique, and a subject matter that leaped wildly about from satire to near-obscenity to despair. They were the first mature works of one of the greatest cartoonists of modern times, Heinrich Kley.

Who was Heinrich Kley? This was a question that was probably asked many times in Munich, for the sketches aroused a great amount of interest. Actually, Kley was one of the last men whom one would have expected to create such fantasies. Before 1908 he had simply been one of many capable academic artists. Born in 1863 in Karlsruhe in the Rhineland, he received his first training in the "practical arts" curriculum of the Karlsruhe Akademie, where he studied under Ferdinand Keller. He later finished his studies under C. Frithjof Smith in Munich. His earliest work, from 1888 to about 1892, consisted of portraits, landscapes, still lifes, city scenes, and historical paintings—mostly unexceptional work. Some of his paintings had found their way into museum collections: "Drinkers," "The Kreutzer Sonata," "In the Boudoir," and so on. He had also been responsible for two historical murals in the post office in Baden Baden: "The Consecration of the Roman Altar to Mercury," and "Kaiser Wilhelm the First's Walk."

Kley had also created for himself a small reputation as a very competent depicter of industrial scenes, which he painted in oils and water color, from about 1892. He gathered his subject matter from the processes of manufacturing, and turned coal and steam and sweat into paintings which showed considerable understanding of the processes involved in industry. His "Pouring Steel at Krupp" had been praised as "catching the poetry of the modern machine world," and George Grosz has recorded his delight with one of Kley's industrial watercolors. Unfortunately, none of these pre-1908 paintings has been reproduced in a form available to the English-speaking world, but if we may judge from descriptions of them, and from the Black Forest landscape which appeared in *Jugend* in 1910, they were quite different from the pen and ink work that made him famous.

This was the Heinrich Kley who was on record, but it was not the Heinrich Kley who was now pouring in sketches to *Jugend* and the great Munich humor periodical, *Simplizissimus*. Something had happened to him, but just what we do not know. The Heinrich Kley who had once "caught the poetry" of factories now revealed the Devil smirking behind smoke stacks; the Kley who had painted symbolically acceptable historical murals in city halls and post offices now daggered bureaucracy at every possible occasion. Kley had now become a "Rubens corrupted by Rabelais."

Kley now became a famous man, and it is easy enough to see why. Even beyond the technical virtu-

osity which his pen sketches show, he captured the disillusionment that was such a strong under-current in Germany (despite the war spirit which existed at other levels), and his jibes drew emotional resonance from his audience. He was a deft pricker of bubbles; even shocking in the expression of his perceptions. Social life, as illustrated by Kley, took on the quality of Restif de la Bretonne or Crebillon, and cruelty and pain and ironic laughter emerged unexpectedly in the jittery lines that crossed and intercrossed so individually.

Kley now started to divulge a world of metaphor and paradox as wildly bizarre as the visions of the elder Breughel or the animal scrolls of 13th century Japan, with both of which he has obvious affinities. Animals and monsters and weird emergences of bestiality from a human base all symbolized the various vices and follies that beset mankind: with virtues Kley had little concern.

At first glance we might think that Kley had some deep symbolism in mind, with his elephants, bird-women, satyrs, crocodiles, and assorted chimeras, but a closer examination shows that there are only a few elementary equations to be drawn: The following items, for example, are equal members of a long equation: elephants, babies and children, lubberliness, and coy, awkward innocence. (Elephants may have entered the equation because of their popularity in the advertising of his day.) Perhaps this equation is the reason that the picture of the elephant-seller arouses a feeling of horror and dismay in some viewers. Elsewhere, his symbolism is often traditional: the centaur usually equals lust, the faun or devil is usually to be found where human suffering is strong. Inversions of image are sometimes used, like racing snails, and puns and word and thought play find their place upon his paper. The erotic element is strong, and there is a certain infantile delight in words and utensils and postures suggestive of excretion—an obvious desire to shock at all costs.

As we glance back at these drawings from 1960, they now seem to be an integral part of the multi-channelled artistic outflow that was going on in Continental Europe in the 1910's and early 1920's. Kley lived in the same Munich that harbored Kandinsky, Klee, and the other Blue Riders. Yet despite coincidence in time and space, there seems to have been no social or artistic relationship between Kley and the modernists. Perhaps this was a difference of age: Kley

was now about 50, paunchy and solemn, according to a self-portrait of this time. Perhaps it was because Kley was more absorbed with the world of pain and revulsion than they were. Perhaps Kley, an astonishing draftsman whose animal sketches rank technically among the best, had little understanding and sympathy for the experiments of men who were far beneath him in technique.

This was Heinrich Kley during his last period of productivity, between 1908 and World War I; a mysterious satirist and satyr, who seems to have felt pain where others laughed, and laughed, not always pleasantly, where others were silent. We know nothing about him personally, beyond what can be guessed from the strange reversal in his life and the personality that emerges from his work. After the appearance of his books (*Skizzenbuch* [1909], *Skizzenbuch II* [1910], *Sammel-Album* [1923], *Leut' und Viecher* [1912] he only occasionally illustrated art books. In the March 1939 issue of *Gebrauchsgraphik*, however, Kley is referred to as an outstanding contemporary commercial artist. The article reproduces a delicately colored industrial scene from the Krupp plant and some pen and ink sketches—in sketch-book style—which he had drawn for the Minimax catalogue for the year. After this he drops out of sight.

Kley's work was very popular for a time, and each of his books—which contain both periodical illustrations and new work—went through several editions. It is easy to understand, however, why he and his work would have been feared and disliked in the Germany that was emerging in the third and fourth decades of the century. He is ignored in histories of the magazines to which he contributed, and is passed over in silence in books on the art movements of Munich, although many men of lesser ability are discussed.

Kley's death has been reported many times, so that it is not certain just when he actually did die. A rumor of his death in the early 1940's has been denied. According to some authorities he died on August 2, 1945; according to others, he died on February 8, 1952. Kley, who perpetually evoked the demonic and absurd in man, would have enjoyed this confusion.

New York
November, 1960

Dover Publications, Inc.

SKETCHBOOK
SKIZZENBUCH



SKETCHBOOK
One Hundred Pen Drawings
by
HEINRICH KLEY

SKIZZENBUCH
Hundert Federzeichnungen
von
HEINRICH KLEY



Wet Nurse to Elephants
Die Elefantenamme



The Tip I
Das Trinkgeld I

Wiederholungs-
aufgaben



The Tip II
Das Trinkgeld II





Springtime
Der Frühling





A Game of Diablerina
Diaballetteuse



Love's Labor's Lost
Verlorene Liebesmüh





What a devilish stench!
Pfui Deifl!





Committee for Public Morals
Die Sittenkommission



Sabotage
Betriebsstörung





The pastor sleeps. The noontime meal
Was ample, and the day is hot.
And Karo too is stuffed from head to heel.
A comfort now prevails of sated glut.

But while the pastor's sleeping for the nonce
A dream approaches—horrid and abhorred:
That he was truly, all at once,
As poor as Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Herr Pastor schläft. Das Mittagessen
War reichlich, und der Tag ist schwül.
Auch Karo hat sich vollgefressen.
Es herrscht ein sattes Wohlgefühl.

Indessen der Herr Pastor schlief,
Kommt ihm ein Traum, der schrecklich ist:
Dass er mit einmal effektive
So arm sei wie Herr Jesus Christ.





Picnic
Picknick



The Ladies' Marching Band
Die Damenkapelle





Hey diddle!
Duliöh!





"And why shouldn't I play the guitar?"
"Warum soll denn ich nicht Guitarr spielen?"



"Sure I play the guitar. Now all the more!"
"Freilich spiel ich Guitarr. Jetzt erst recht!"

After the Ball
Nach dem Ball



Chamber Trio
Kammertrio



Visit of Condolence
Beileid





Accordion
Harmonika



The Breastwork
Die Brüstung





How Disgusting!
Igitt igitt!



Quartet I
Quartett I



Quartet II
Quartett II





Asking for Her Hand
Die Werbung

Red-faced Messenger Service, Inc.*
Rote Radler



*Rote Radler was a messenger service in Germany. The joke consists of the pun on rot, which means both red and red-faced.



Moving Day
Umzug





The Tenor
Der Tenor





The Airship
Das Luftschiff



When a boy and a girl are in accord before God and have their little toothbrushes along, the whole world is theirs.

Wenn zwei vor Gott sich einig sind und ihre Zahnbürsten bei sich haben, gehört ihnen die ganze Welt.







Orient Express
Orient-Express



Solitude in the Royal Prussian Forest
Kgl. preuss. Waldeinsamkeit

*From top to bottom the signs on the tree read: "Keep out" (Betreten Verboten), "No Cars" (Befahren des Waldes Automobils), and "Society for Beautification" (Verschönerungsverein).

The Hygienic Sausage Factory
Die Hygienische Wurstküch



Away from Rome!
Los von Rom!





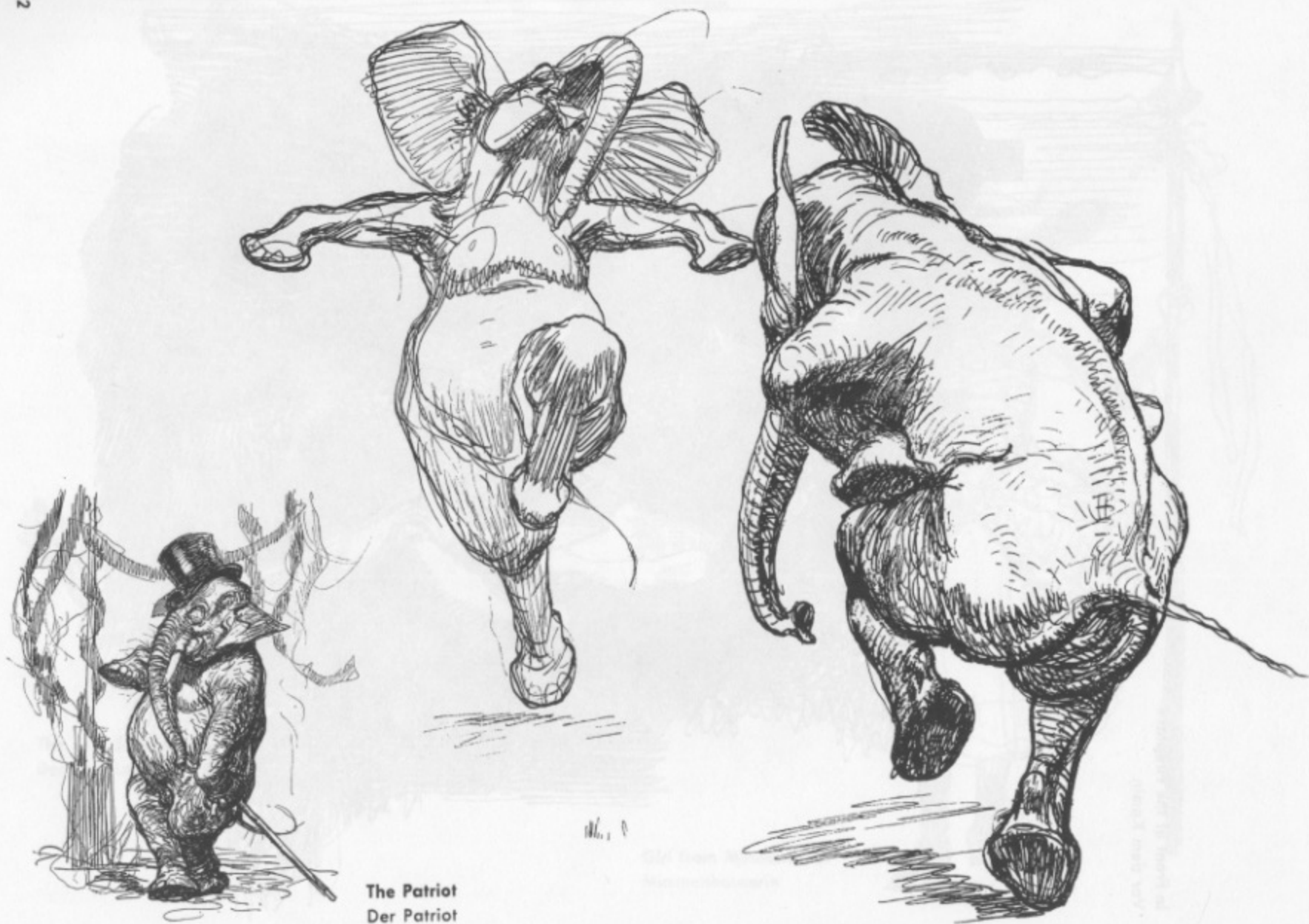
The Herr Schoolmaster
Der Herr Lehrer



Girl from Mimmenhaus
Mimmenhauserin

In Front of the Fireplace
Vor dem Kamin





The Patriot
Der Patriot

"If I were a tiny bird . . ."
"Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär . . ."

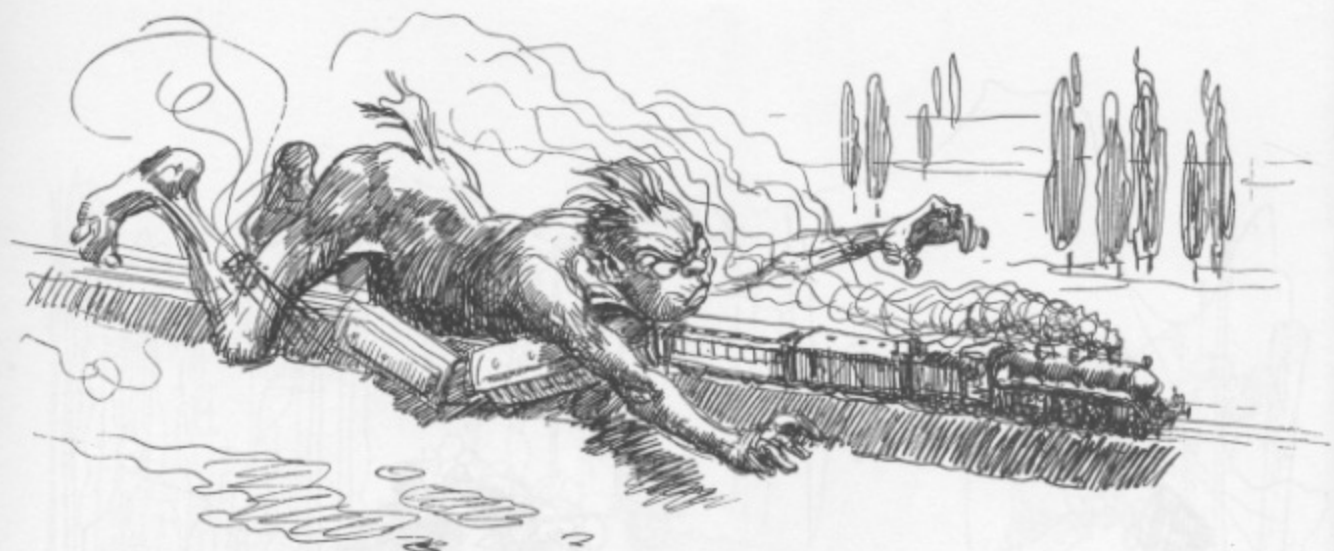




The Copyists
Die Kopisten



Idyll at the South Pole
Südpol-Idyll



A Love Story
Eine Liebesgeschichte







Doctor of Engineering
Dr. ing.



The Theater Director
Der Herr Direktor



Gallop to the Right
Rechtsgalopp

Recruits
Rekruten







SKETCHBOOK II

SKIZZENBUCH II





SKETCHBOOK II
One Hundred Pen Drawings
by
HEINRICH KLEY

SKIZZENBUCH II
Hundert Federzeichnungen
von
HEINRICH KLEY

Anthill
Ameisenhaufen







Decorate Your Home!
Schmücke dein Heim!



Mole and Purebred Pig
Maulwurf und Edelschwein



The Nursemaid
Das Kindsmädchen



Carnival
Fasching



The Battle-tested Veteran
Der schlachterprobte Veteran



Bazaar Furies
Basarfurien

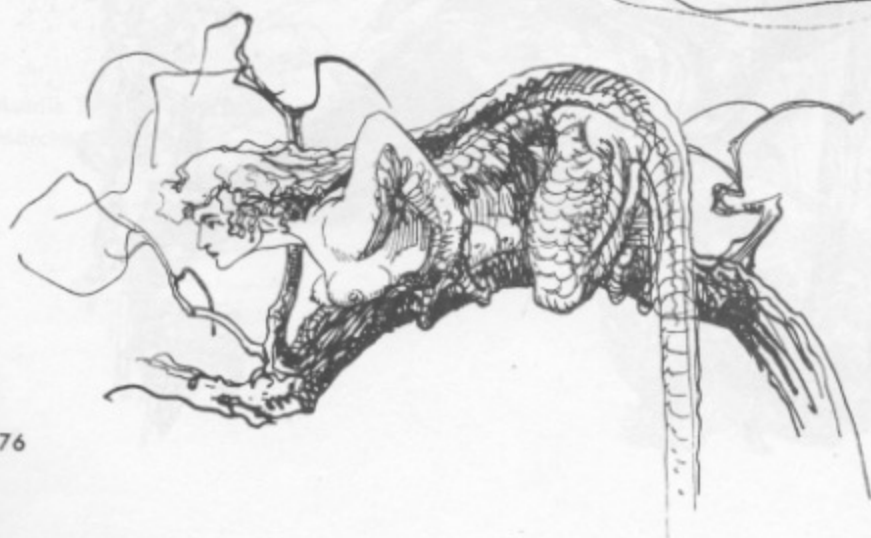


Auntie Tells a Fairy Tale
Märchentante





Parlor Game
Gesellschaftsspiel





Business Is Bad
Schlechte Geschäfte



High Horsemanship
Hohe Schule



The Aesthete
Der Aesthet





Almost Every Inch a Gentleman
Fast jeder Zoll ein Kavalier

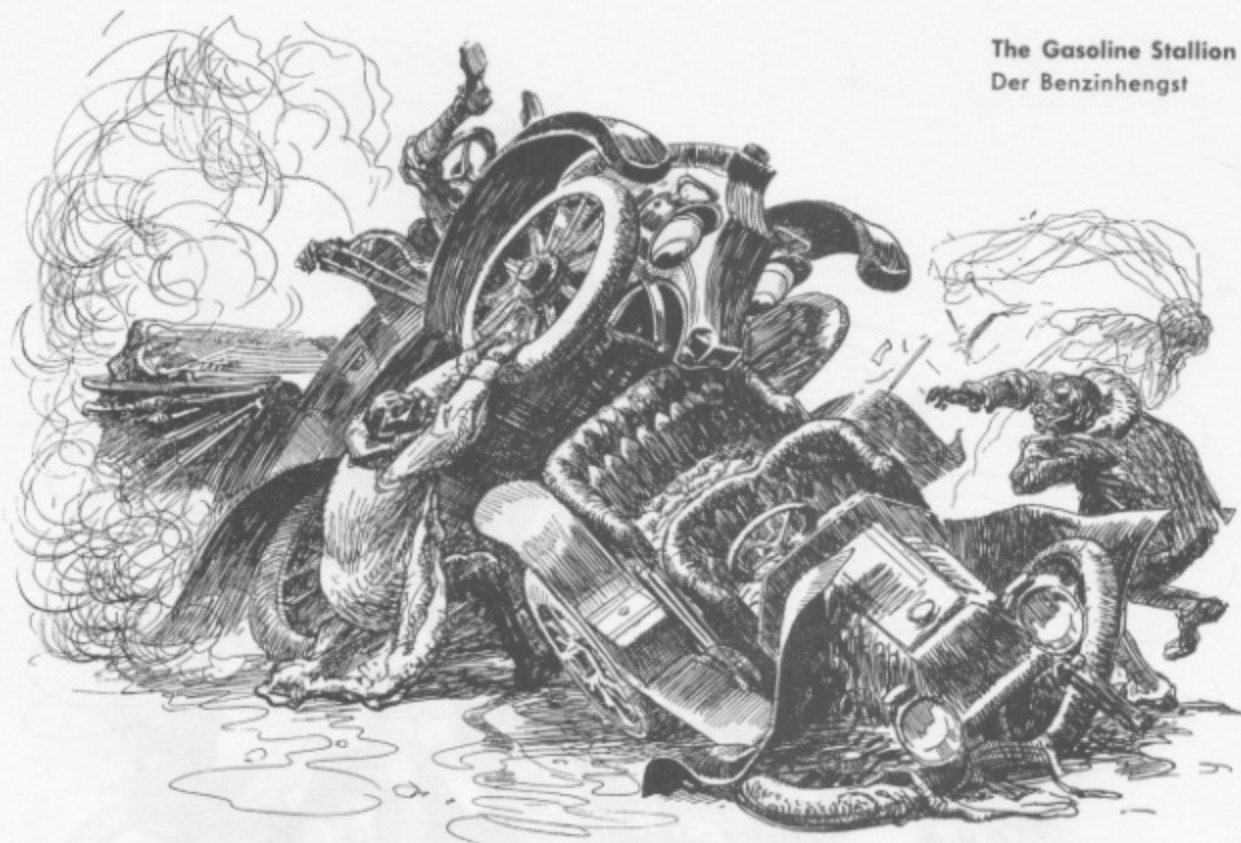


Ballast
Ballast



Asylum for Cold-water Cures
Kaltwasserheilanstalt

The Gasoline Stallion
Der Benzinhengst





"Pardon me—how do I get to the YMCA?"

"Pardon—wie komm ich hier am nächsten zum
Vereinshaus christlicher junger Männer?"



Fruit Fair
Obsthandel



The Handstand
Der Handstand





Staying-power at Cards
Der Dauerskat



Bucolic Intermezzo
Schäferstündchen



The Workman's Compensation Patient
Der Kassenpatient





Giant's Toy
Riesenspielzeug



The School for Alpine Climbing
Die Kletterschule





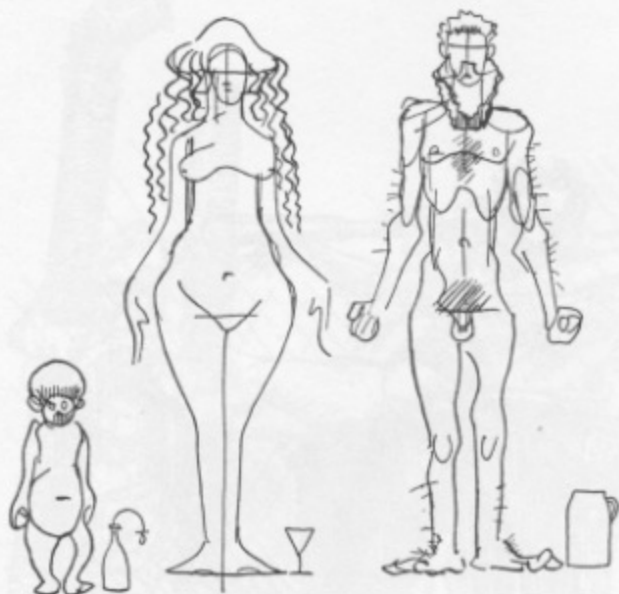
Popocatepetl
Popocatepetl*

*Popocatepetl is a volcano in Mexico.

†The sign on the figure reads, "Families can cook their coffee here."



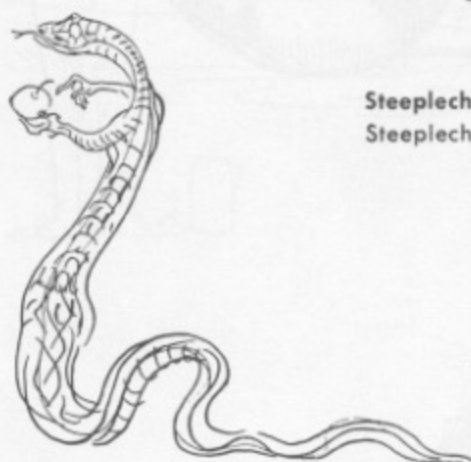
Training
Training



Grand House Cleaning
Kehraus



Little Seesaw Man
Das Wagemännle



Steeplechase
Steeplechase



Grand Ball of the Diocese
Diözesanball



Human Shish Kebab
Menscherln à la fourchette



The End Hallows the Means
Der Zweck heiligt das Mittel



Tug of War
Tauziehen

The Love Match
Die Neigungsheirat



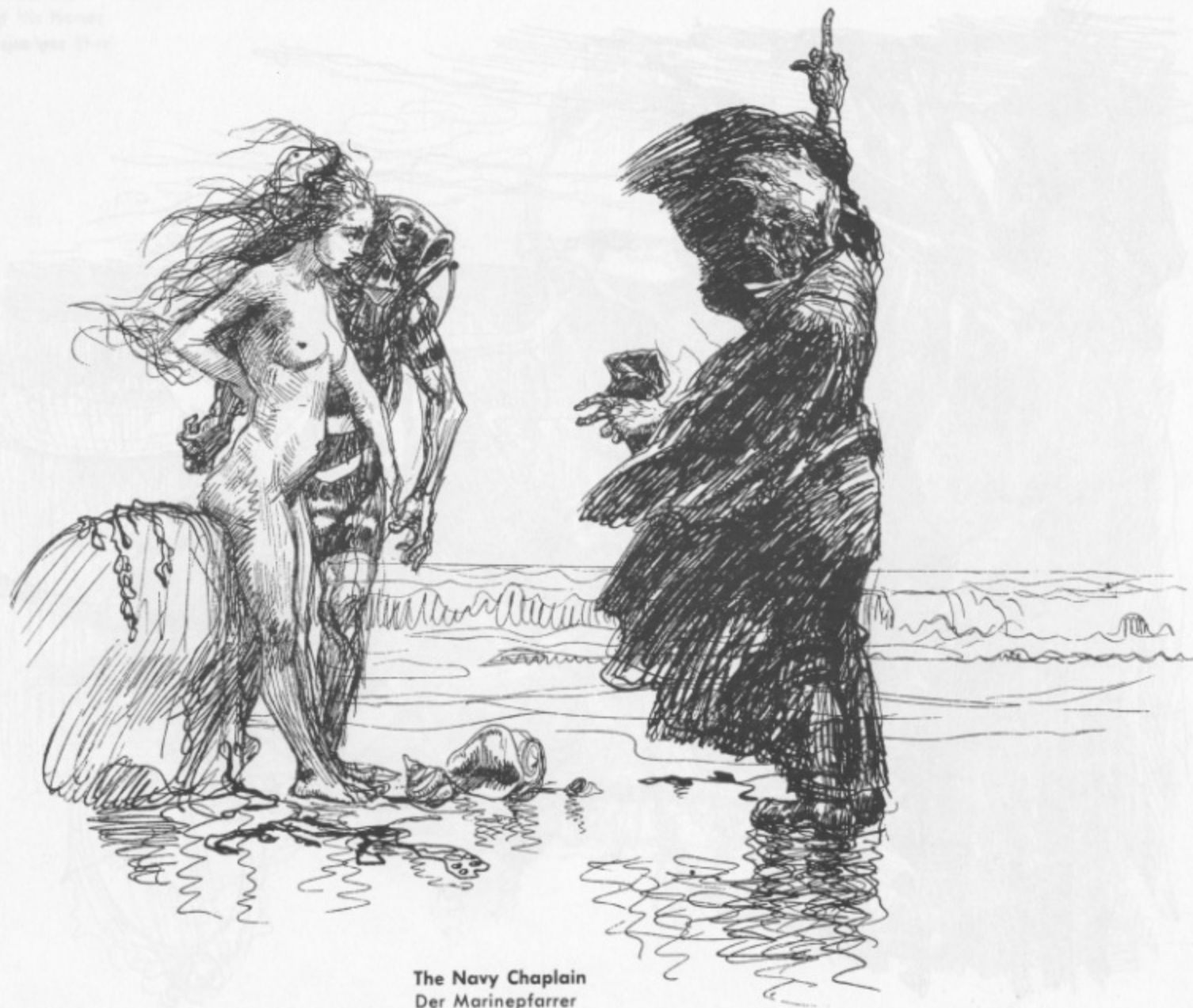
*The sign above the door reads, "Marriage License Bureau."



The Traveller on a Pleasure Trip
Der Vergnügungsreisende



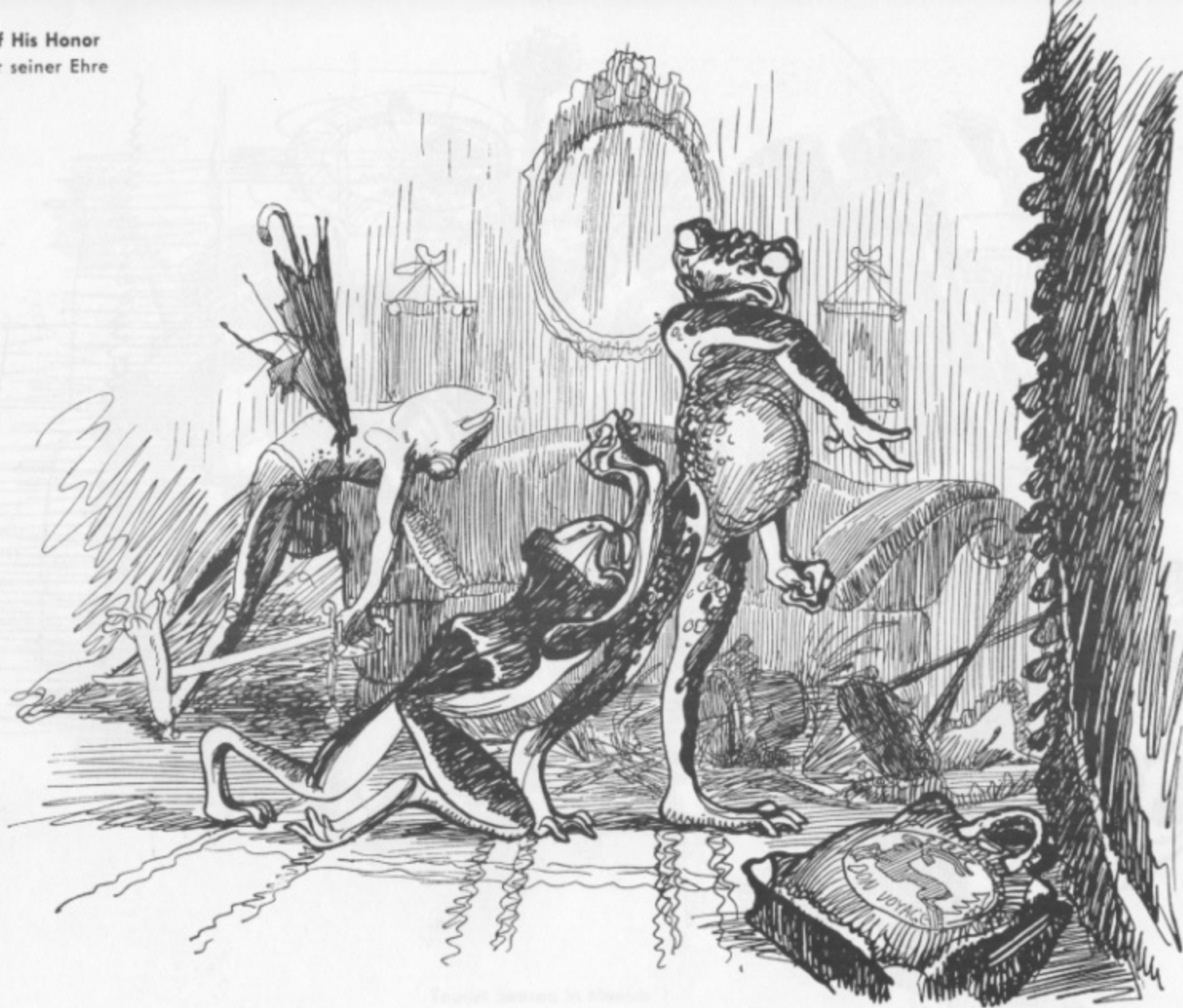
Final Spurt
Endspurt



The Navy Chaplain
Der Marinepfarrer

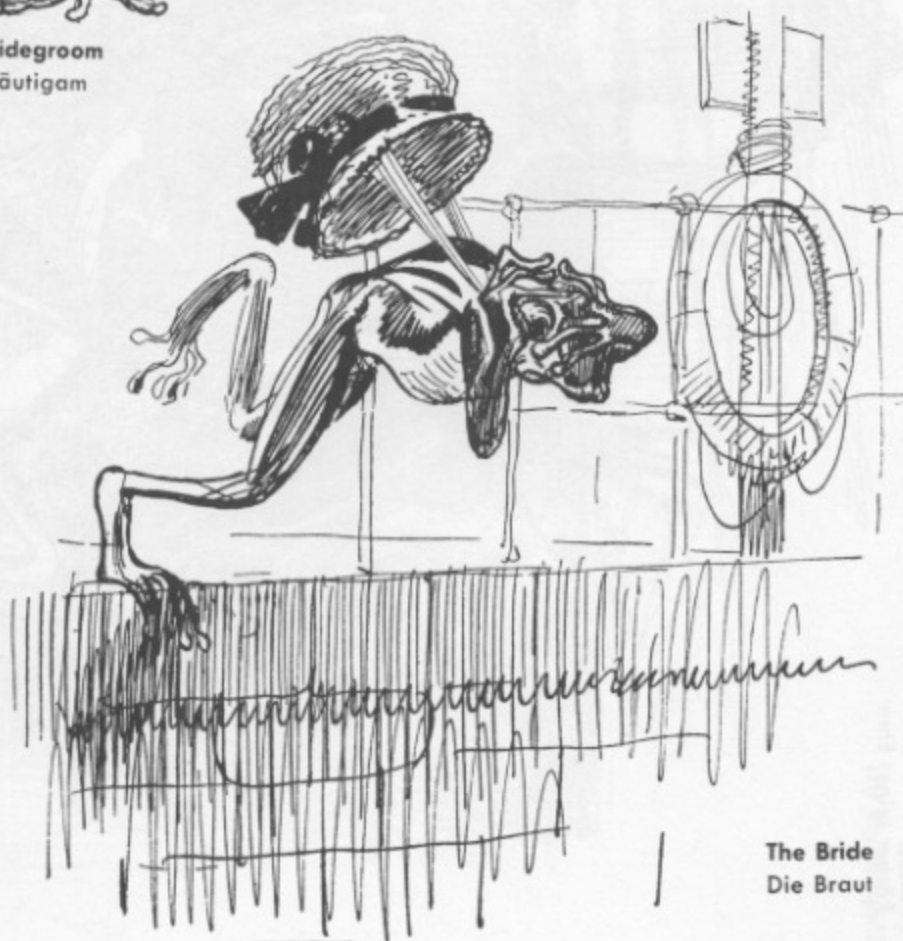


Caught in the Act
In flagranti





The Bridegroom
Der Bräutigam

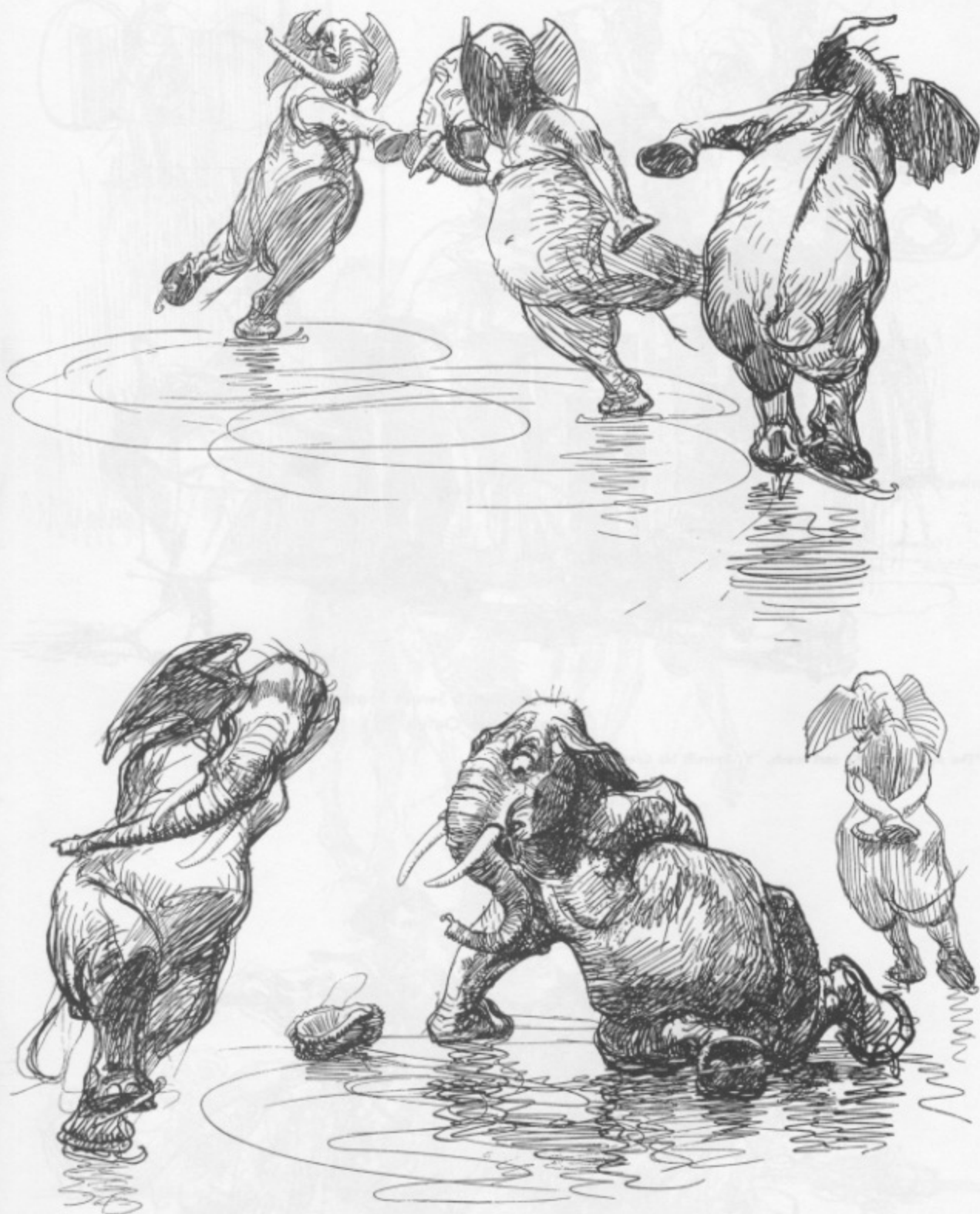


The Bride
Die Braut



Tourist Season in Munich
Fremdensaison in München





On the Skating Rink
Auf der Eisbahn



Stoves with a Sweet Tooth
Naschende Oefen

*The sign above the cart reads, "V. Smirelli Ice Cream."

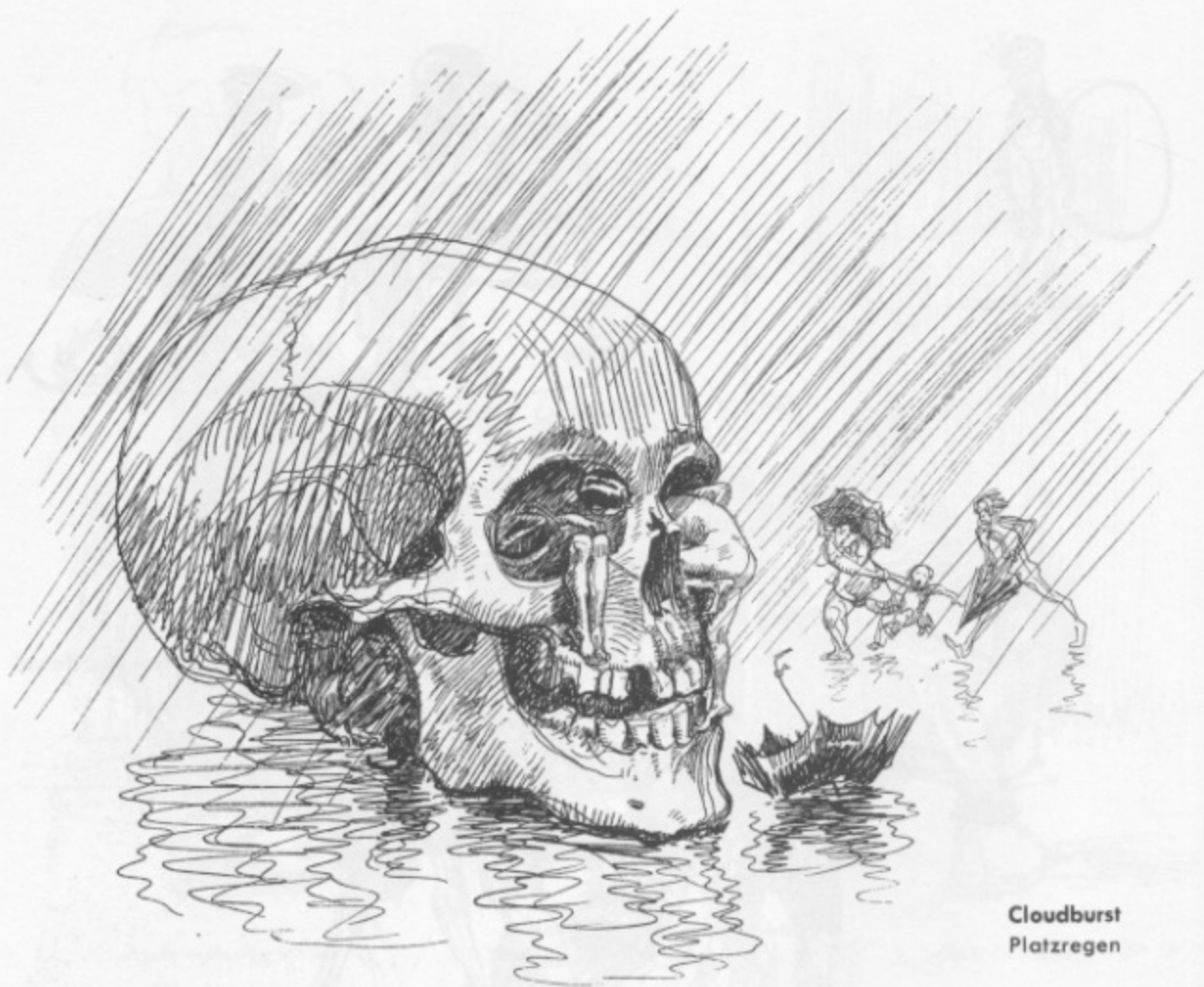


Ladies' Gym Group
Damenriege

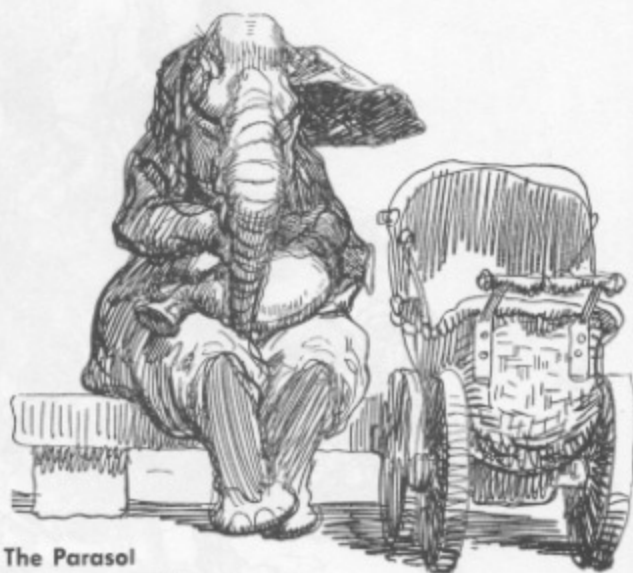


Strike! All Nine Pins Are Down!
Alle Neune!





Cloudburst
Platzregen



The Parasol
Der Sonnenschirm

Songs with Guitar Accompaniment
Lieder zur Laute





Like Cures Like
*Similia similibus**

*The complete Latin expression is *Similia similibus curantur* (lit. Like [ailments] are cured by like.)



Girls at the Butter Churn

Mädlen am Butterfass

(Young Ladies at the Margarine Tub) (Junge Damen an der Marjarintonne)



The Politicians
Die Politiker





Street Race
Strassenrennen



The Open Sandwich
Das belegte Brot



The Metaphysician
Der Metaphysiker



The Child Prodigy
Das Wunderkind



Mrs. Cook
Mrs. Cook



The Olden Days
The Wonderful



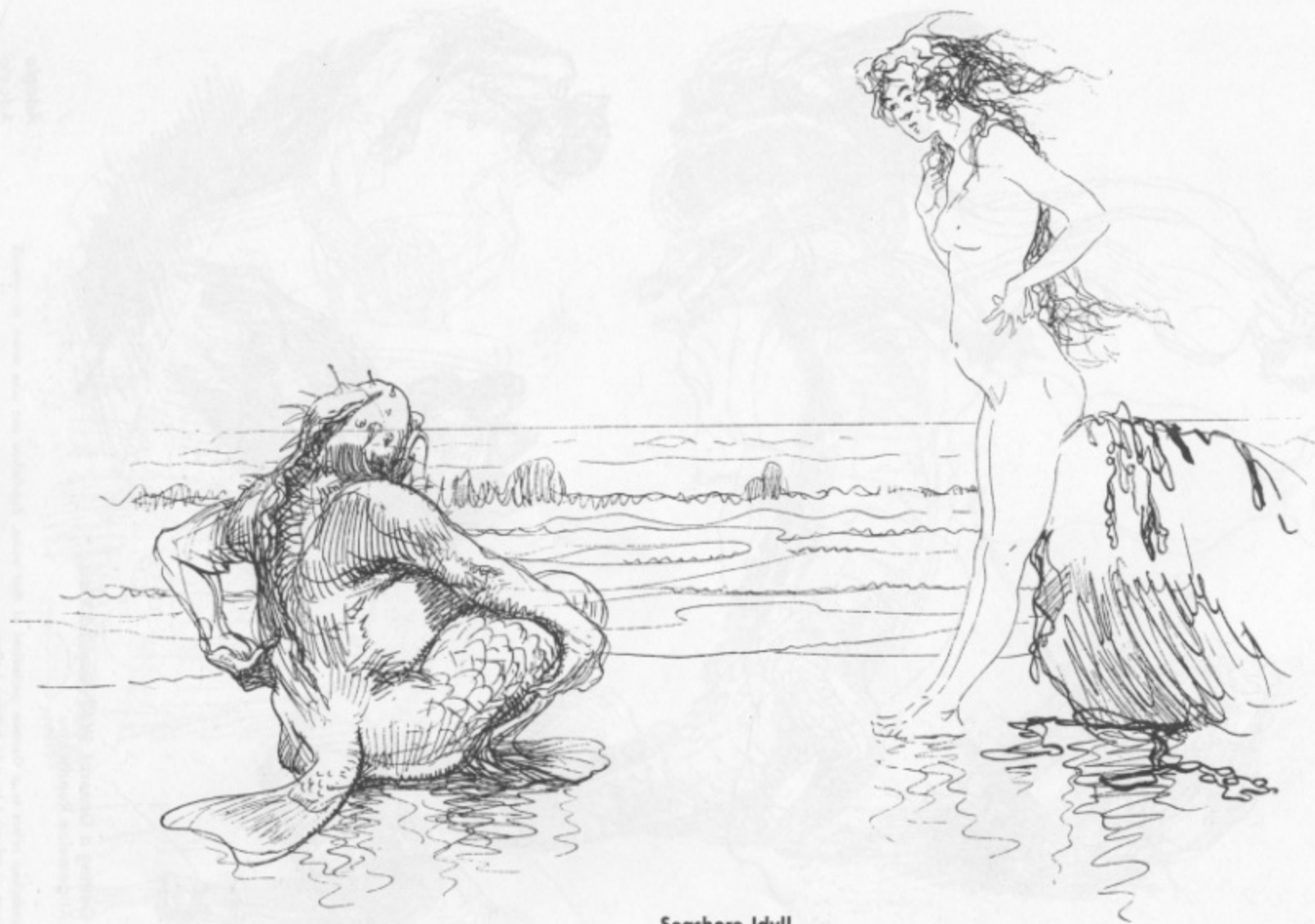
The Ivory Tusk
Das Elfenbein

*The sign above the door reads, "Municipal Pawn-shop" (Städtische Pfandleihe Anstalt).

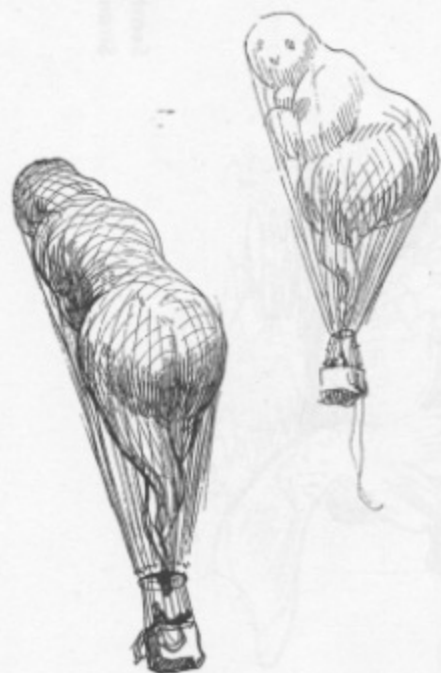
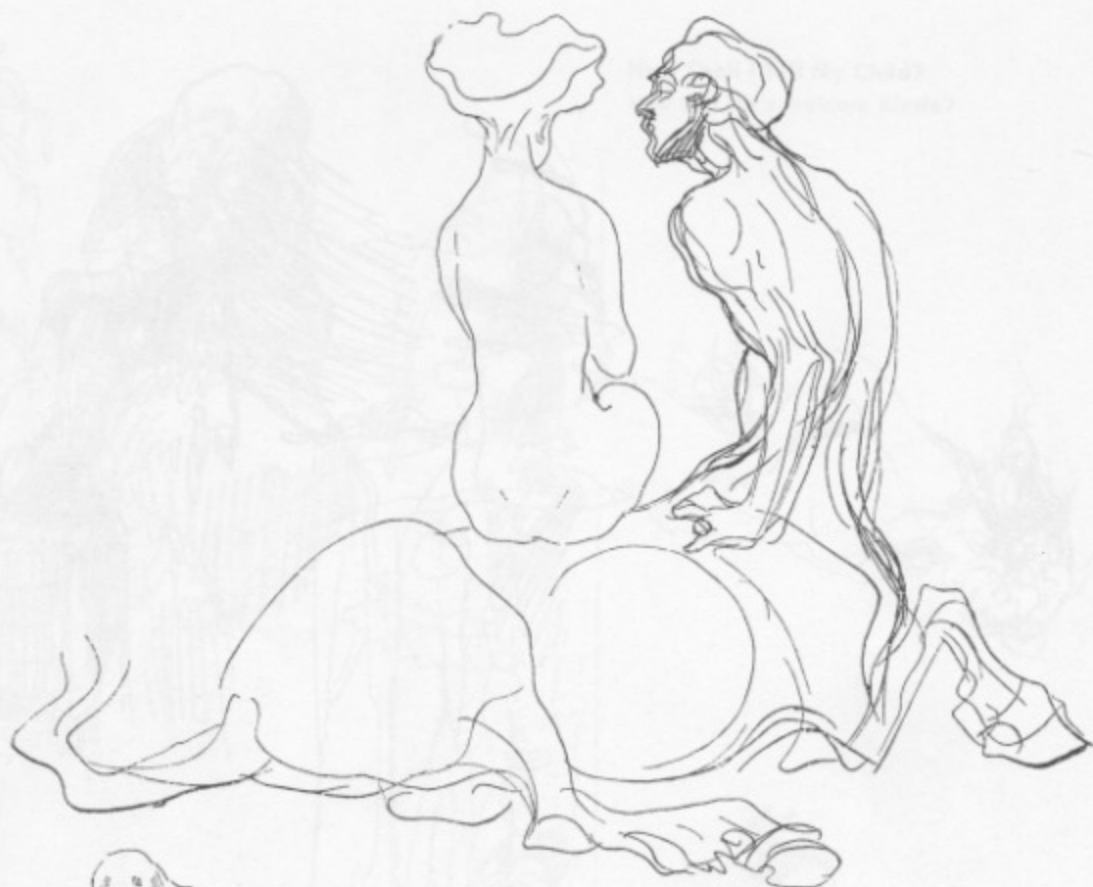
How Shall I Tell My Child?
Wie sag ich's meinem Kinde?



Ju Jitsu
Dschiu Dschitsu



Seashore Idyll
Strandidyll



Getting a General, Well-rounded View
Allgemeine Rundschau*

*Allgemeine Rundschau refers to a German periodical of that name. Rundschau can also mean an overall survey, in this case as afforded by a high-flying balloon.

Adagio
Adagio



The Train
Die Schleppe



England Victorious
England siegt



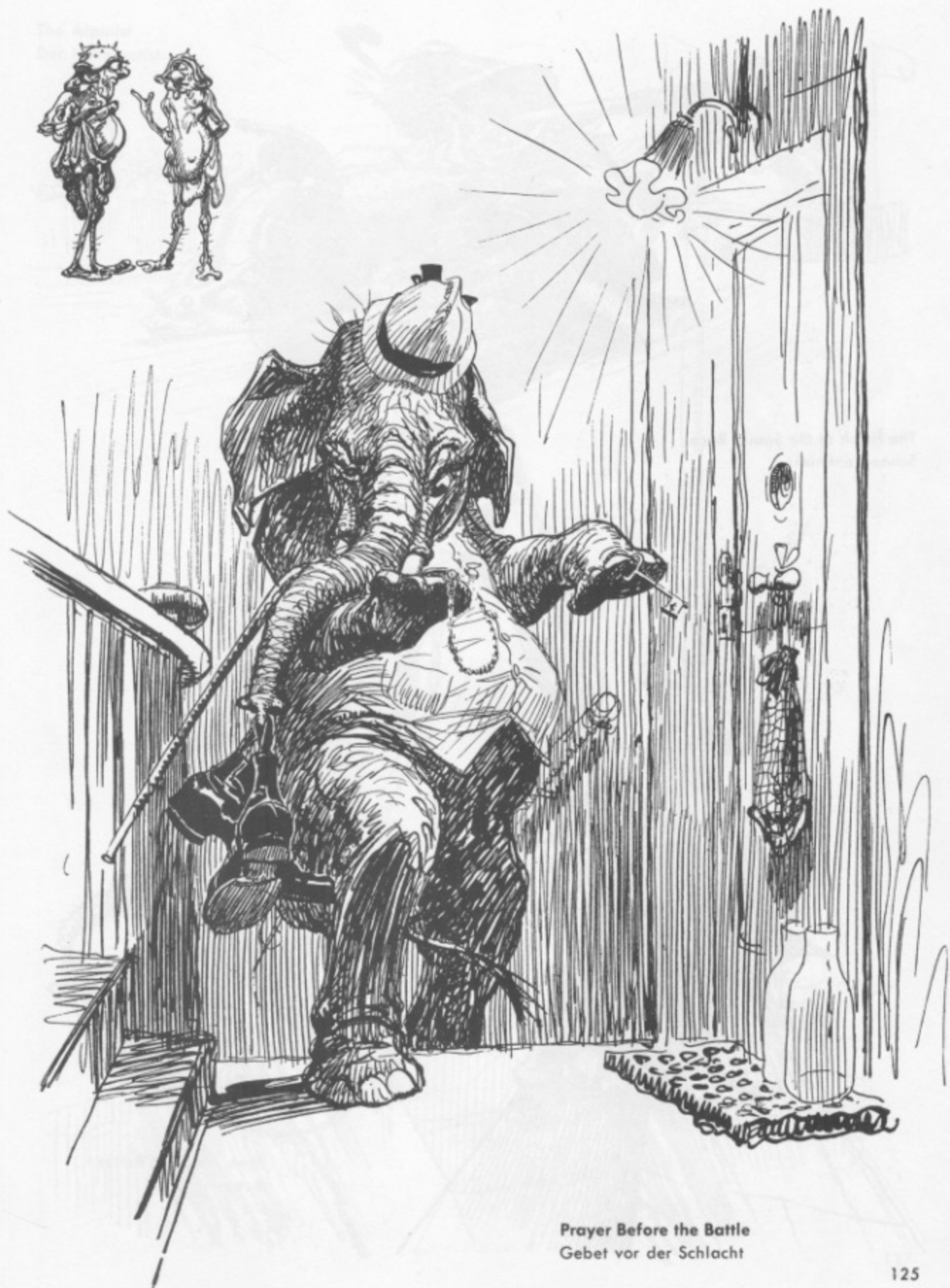
The Maiden's Prayer
Das Gebet der Jungfrau



Potiphar's Wife
Frau Potiphar



The Son-in-law
Der Schwiegersohn



Prayer Before the Battle
Gebet vor der Schlacht

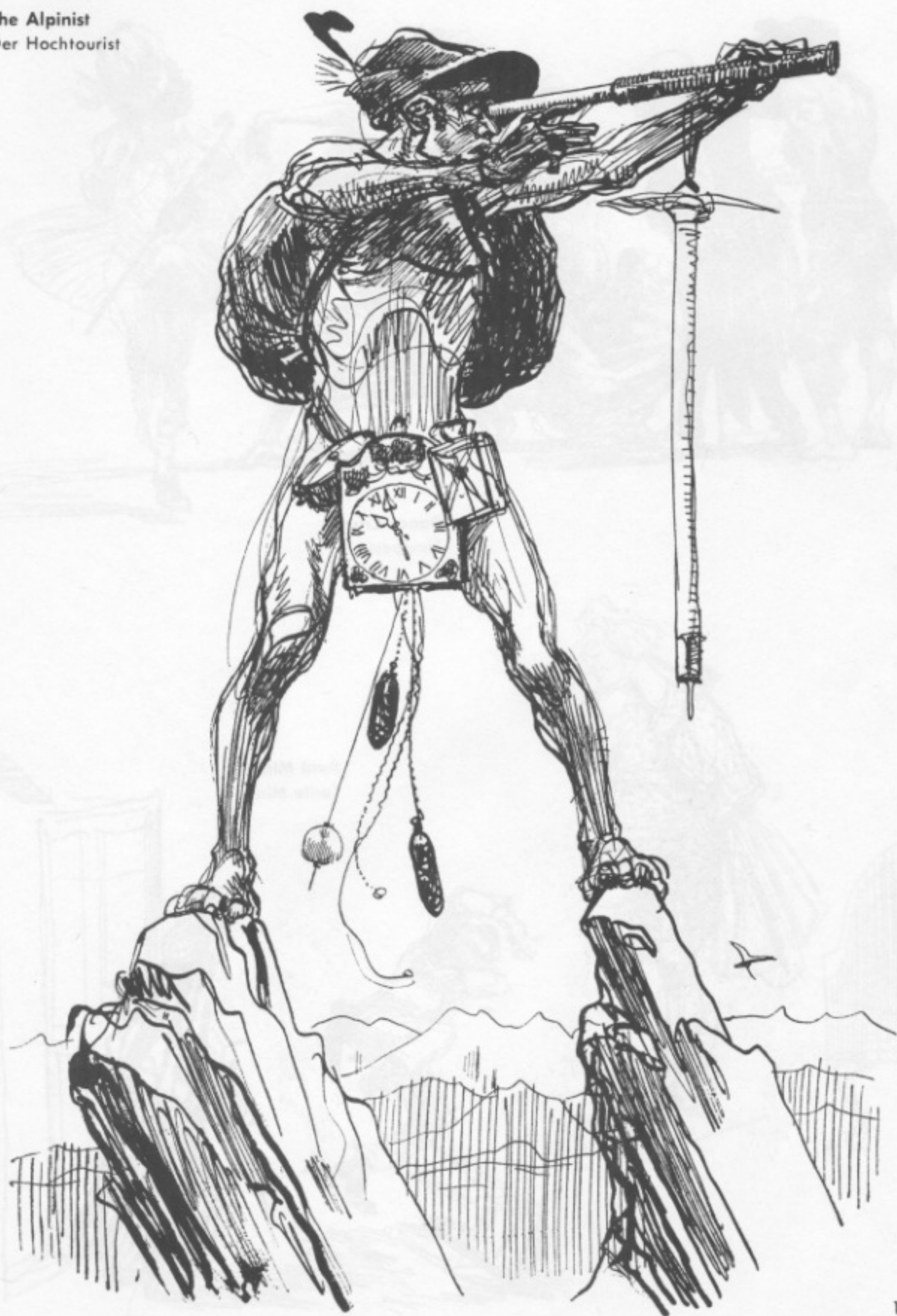


The Finish at the Snails' Race
Schneckenfinish



Man, Made of Butter
Buttermensch

The Alpinist
Der Hochtourist





Dance Craze
Tanzpest



Aunt Mina
Tante Mina

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THE DRAWINGS OF HEINRICH KLEY

This is a new unabridged edition of the two sketchbooks by Heinrich Kley, one of the greatest cartoonists and social satirists of modern times. Kley's drawings combine savage humor that cuts to the bone with unbelievably brilliant draughtsmanship. Several of these sketches have been reprinted time and again, and probably everyone has seen at least one. But until now the main body of Kley's work has been almost completely unavailable, and it has been impossible to savor the full richness of his mocking irony.

First published in Munich in 1909 and 1910, Kley's sketches reflected the growing tensions of the 20th century and the strong undercurrent of disillusionment that Europe was prey to. His frantic, posturing, iconoclastic brainchildren lash mercilessly at bureaucracy, militarism, false "Gemütlichkeit," the eccentricities of reformers, the ballast of majesty, and many more facets of a weary civilization. Anyone interested in caustic social satire will find that these vivid, unforgettable cartoons are still among the most enjoyable and pungent examples of this art. Kley's bizarre hybrid and bestial forms (in the long tradition of European visionary fantasy exemplified by Hieronymus Bosch, the elder Breughel, and Goya) give them far more depth and levels of meaning than other works in the genre.

Kley's imaginative universe and strongly individual style have often been imitated by later artists, but none has captured his acid depths. His nervous line quality and extraordinary technique are still inspirations for artists and cartoonists who want to learn how to draw line figures that practically leap out of the page.

A new introduction, specially written for this edition, gathers together the available information on Kley's life and training, the formative elements in the present sketches, and the other facets of his art.

First unabridged and unaltered republication of *Skizzenbuch*, 1909, and *Skizzenbuch II*, 1910. Two books bound as one. Total of 200 illustrations. xviii + 128pp. 7 1/4 x 10 1/2. Paperbound.

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